

# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

# MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the Year ended December 31st, 1943.

To Thetford Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit the Annual Report for 1943 as follows:—

As in previous years this report is cut down to essential details on instructions from the Minister of Health on grounds of security and economy, but all data is being saved for a comprehensive report at the end of the war.

During the year the town has lost a valuable and efficient officer by the death of Dr. A. Oliver, the late Medical Officer of Health, and it again falls to me to write his report. And since you have the confidence in me, to forward my name as his successor, I hope to be able to continue along his lines of service.

### SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area—7,096 acres.

Registrar-General's estimate of Population at mid-year—4,480.

Number of inhabited houses according to the rate book—1,293.

Rateable Value—£17,538.

Sum represented by a penny rate—£72 4s. 4d.

There has been no change in the social conditions in the town, but housing of the floating war time population has led to some overcrowding of dwellings. There is still a large employment of women in war work.

#### Vital Statistics.

			Total.	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate	...	69	32	37	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population at mid 1943—15.04.
	Illegitimate	...	5	1	4	
Still Births	...	...	1	1	Nil.	Rate per 1,000 total births—13.
Deaths	...	...	63	31	32	Death Rate per 1,000 average population—14.06.

Deaths from Puerperal causes (Headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar-General's short list)—

No. 29 Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
No. 30 Other Puerperal causes	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
Total	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

Death Rate of Infants under one year:—

All Infants per 1,000 live-births	...	...	...	...	44.9
Legitimate per 1,000 legitimate live-births	...	...	...	...	44.9
Illegitimate per 1,000 illegitimate live-births	...	...	...	...	Nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	6
„ „ Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	Nil.
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	Nil.
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	Nil.

The Birth and Death Rates for the town are about consistent with those given for the country as a whole, but the Death Rate is higher than usual for the town.

The main causes of death were:—Heart Disease 25, Cancer 6, Diseases of the Chest 6, Apoplexy 4, Influenza 4.

The Infantile Death Rate remains satisfactorily below that given for England and Wales—49.

There was an epidemic of Influenza starting in mid-November which was widespread, but not serious in character. It was concurrent with the epidemic all over the country, but did not require the extra help offered by the Military authorities, the W.V.S., and other voluntary organisations, for its control.

## SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

### 1. (1). **Personnel.**

**M.O.H.** part time M.D., D.P.H., who was also Medical Officer to the Infant Welfare Clinic.

**Sanitary Inspector**, part time, Royal Sanitary Institute.

**Health Visitor**, who acts as Nurse at the Infant Welfare Clinic, C.M.B., R.S.I., Health Visitors Examination, R.S.I. Maternity and Child Welfare Certificate.

**District Nurse**, S.R.N., C.M.B.

**Town Midwife**, S.R.N., C.M.B.

### (2). **Health Services.**

(c) During the Influenza epidemic a scheme was prepared by which Red Cross nurses and W.V.S. personnel were available at all times of the day to do home nursing and carry out household duties for the sick. Otherwise no change in the Health Services.

2. No change.

### 3. **Maternity and Child Welfare.**

This work has been carried on as usual by the Thetford and District Maternity and Child Welfare Association with the help of a midwife provided by the Norfolk Nursing Federation.

There were no serious epidemics of infectious disease and all the Clinics were open throughout the year: the attendances have remained about the same as last year though tending to increase towards the end of the year. As it was pointed out last year, war circumstances such as part employment of mothers, and the difficulties of obtaining "home helps" have reduced the amount of work done at these Clinics. The work of the health visitor has not decreased and the floating population has caused her some extra visiting. She has been instrumental in increasing the percentage of children under 5 years of age, who are inoculated against Diphtheria, to over 70 per cent.

The children's Clinic has been moderately attended all the year, but the Ante-Diphtheria campaign has been to a great extent carried out there. As the result of Nurse Sowels personal visits many mothers now consider that Ante-Diphtheria inoculation is one of the things which ought to be done for their children.

The children's Nursery has been removed to the Roman Catholic Hall on London Road, and is administered by the Norfolk County Council, and mothers who are at work all day make use of it to board out their children.

An excellent clothing exchange has been run by the W.V.S. at their centre on Norwich Road, where outgrown children's clothing in good condition can be exchanged for other clothing that fits. Neither cash nor coupons pass in the exchange.

Some 620 lbs. of blackcurrant jam has been made by the W.V.S. during the year for distribution to necessitous cases. To show that this is appreciated it was necessary to ask the mothers to supply the sugar this year and the fine result speaks for itself.

Coming to the maternity part of the work, war circumstances have considerably reduced the material available. There were only 29 maternity cases attended in their homes, 19 of these were attended by the town midwife on her own, a very small number for a full time midwife. The Ante-Natal Clinic which is available each month at the Cottage Hospital was opened regularly but not all the cases attended and there were only 2 Post-Natal cases. These small numbers are due to difficulties mothers experience in making home arrangements to have their babies. Domestic help is unobtainable on account of the large amount of remunerative full, and part time employment, occupying the women who used to act as "home helps." This situation is met by St. Barnabas Hospital which has 4 maternity beds and the 3 nursing homes which are run by private enterprise, relieving the mothers of much worry about the lying-in-period. For mothers who have their babies at home maternity bags are still made up by Mrs. Carter, Bury Road.

The country midwifery carried on by Nurse Sowels has been similarly reduced.

The returns for the various Clinics are as follows:—

#### **Infant Welfare Clinic.**

No. of individual mothers who have attended	...	...	...	...	...	...	85
Total attendances of mothers for the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	274
No. of individual infants under 1 year who attended	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
„ „ children of 1—5 years who attended	...	...	...	...	...	...	91
„ Total attendances of infants	...	...	...	...	...	...	146
„ „ „ children 1—5 years who attended	...	...	...	...	...	...	182
„ „ „ both classes	...	...	...	...	...	...	328
Average attendances of children per Clinic	...	...	...	...	...	...	13.6
„ „ „ mothers	...	...	...	...	...	...	11.4



**Cottage Hospital Ante-Natal Clinic.**

No. of Ante-Natal Clinics held	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
„ Post-Natal „ „	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
„ Ante-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
„ Ante-Natal attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27
„ Post-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
„ Post-Natal attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2

**St. Barnabas Hospital Clinic.**

No. of Ante-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
„ „ „ attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	96
„ Post-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	30
„ „ „ attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	148

**Health Visitor's Report.**

No. of first visits to new infants	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	73
„ visits paid to these	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1340
Total visits to children	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2906
No. of midwifery and maternity cases taken	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6

**4. Nursing Homes.**

A further Nursing Home has been opened in Croxton Road with accommodation for about 4 or 5 mothers.

**SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF AREA.****1. (1) Water.**

No extensions to the Public Water supply were carried out during the year.

A sample of water submitted to the Public Analyst for Chemical and Bacteriological examination was reported on as follows :—

“ This water is of exceptional organic purity and of the highest standard of bacteriological quality. It shows no material variation from the last analysis. It is a pure and wholesome water, quite suitable for drinking, and all the purposes of a public supply.”

**(2) Drainage and Sewage.**

There have been no alterations or extensions of this service during the year.

**2. Rivers and Streams.**

No action has been taken this year.

**3. (1) Closet Accommodation.**

The only change has been the conversion of 3 vaults to pails. This alteration gives :—  
W.C's. 311, Pails 636, Vaults 373.

**(2) Public Cleansing.**

The collection of refuse remains the same as in previous years.

**(3) Sanitary Inspection of Area.**

The report of the Sanitary Inspector is as follows :—

No. of inspections for general nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	314
No. of informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
No. of statutory notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
No. of nuisances abated as result of informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
No. in hand at end of year	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

**(4) Shops and Offices.**

General routine inspections carried out.

**SECTION D.—HOUSING.**

Limited housing routine inspections have been carried out during the year.

**SECTION E.—(a) Milk Supply.**

As in previous years samples were taken and tested by lactometer.

**(b) Meat and other Foods.**

A fair amount of meat and other foods have been examined during the year resulting in the following being condemned as unfit for food :—Meat 122 lbs., Fish 46 lbs., Corned Beef 135 lbs., Bacon 17 lbs., Fruit 12½ cwt., and 129 tins of various foods. A large amount of meat and food inspection was carried out for various military units in the Borough which included the condemnation of Fish and Fish Cakes 641 lbs., Hams 648 lbs., Sausages and Sausage Meat 1016 lbs., Meat 170 lbs., Fruit 75 lbs.

## SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

There was no extensive outbreak of infectious disease, and very little hospitalisation of infectious cases. There were two deaths due to Influenzal Pneumonia. There were five cases of Scarlet Fever, all of which were sent to hospital. Scarlet Fever is losing much of its virulence and in most cases hospitalisation is not necessary, except for the occasional serious case and where proper isolation, and home care is not available, as in overcrowded houses and dirty conditions. The usual disinfection of the house must be carried out at the termination of the illness.

Jaundice of any type has now been made a notifiable disease in the Eastern region. This disease has been endemic in Britain since the war started, with local epidemics; and an investigation is being carried out in order to clear up the æbiology, and discover a treatment for it. The infectious type is known to have a long incubation period. There have been no epidemics of this nature in Thetford.

The Ante-diphtheria campaign has been carried on successfully during the year, mainly on the impetus given by the measures taken at the end of last year. 72% of the children under 5 years old had been inoculated and 82% of the children from 5—15 years of age.

### Notifications.

Disease.	Total Cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Pneumonia	6	3	2
Chicken Pox	16	Nil.	Nil.
Whooping Cough	22	Nil.	Nil.
Erysipelas	2	Nil.	Nil.
Scarlet Fever	5	5	Nil.

### Tuberculosis.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M	F.	M.	F.
5	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
65	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Totals	1	1	1	—	2	—	—	—

In conclusion I would like to record my appreciation of the work done by your Sanitary Inspector, and to congratulate him on the standard of work maintained in spite of his reduced staff.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. L. OLIVER,

Medical Officer of Health.

Thetford,

18th June, 1944.